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UNCLAS KINSHASA 001830

SIPDIS

AIDAC
STATE FOR AF/C ALLAN EASTHAM, C.PASCHALL
STATE FOR INR/AA
AID/W FOR DCHA/OFDA - I.MACNAIRN, M.MARX, T.MCRAE
AID/W FOR DCHA/FFP - DWELLER, N.CARLSON, N.COX
AID/W FOR AFR - K. O'DONNELL
NAIROBI FOR USAID/OFDA/ARO - J.MYER
NAIROBI FOR USAID/FFP - P. FESSENDEN, A.DEPREZ
ROME FOR USUN FODAG - T.LAVELLE

E.O. 12958; NA

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SUBJECT: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC): FY
2005 DISASTER DECLARATION

1. (U) SUMMARY: THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO DRC HAS DETERMINED THAT THE EMERGENCY HUMANITARIAN NEEDS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE WAR OF 1998-2003 CONTINUE, AND THAT THE CRISIS IS OF SIGNIFICANT MAGNITUDE TO WARRANT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S CONTINUED ASSISTANCE IN FY 2005. THE GOVERNMENT OF DRC HAS ESTABLISHED A NEW MINISTRY OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS TO ASSIST INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AGENCIES IN COORDINATING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE. MISSION AND ITS FIELD PARTNERS APPRECIATE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN FY 2004. THIS ASSISTANCE HELPED SIGNIFICANTLY TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR FOR PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE POPULATIONS. MISSION REQUESTS THAT OFDA FUNDING BE CONTINUED. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) THE CHIEF OF MISSION HEREBY DETERMINES THAT THE COMPLEX HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY IN DRC BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE WAR WHICH STARTED IN AUGUST 1998, CONTINUES TO BE OF SIGNIFICANT MAGNITUDE TO WARRANT U.S. GOVERNMENT'S ASSISTANCE IN FY 2005. CONTINUED OFDA FUNDING IS THEREFORE REQUESTED.

3. (U) THE WAR RESULTED IN THE DISPLACEMENT OF OVER 2 MILLION CIVILIANS AND PARALYZED BASIC SOCIAL SERVICES (HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SANITATION) IN THE EASTERN PARTS OF THE COUNTRY FOR MORE THAN FIVE YEARS. IT DISRUPTED AN ALREADY WEAK TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND AGGRAVATED THE IMPOVERISHMENT OF MILLIONS OF CONGOLESE. ALTHOUGH THE WAR IS OFFICIALLY OVER AND A NEW TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT IS IN PLACE, INSECURITY CONTINUES IN MANY PARTS OF THE COUNTRY DUE TO THE EXISTENCE OF ARMED GROUPS NOT PARTY TO THE PEACE PROCESS. EVEN IN AREAS HAVING SEEN A RETURN OVER THE PAST YEAR TO RELATIVE STABILITY, THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION WILL IMPROVE ONLY SLOWLY. MISSION ANTICIPATES THAT DISASTER ASSISTANCE FUNDS WILL BE NEEDED THROUGH FY 2005 IN ORDER TO RESPOND TO THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS), RETURNING IDPS, AND OTHER WAR-AFFECTED VULNERABLE POPULATIONS.

4. (U) UNDER THE TRANSITIONAL CONSTITUTION, A NEW MINISTRY OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS AND SOLIDARITY HAS BEEN CREATED. HOWEVER, MISSION BELIEVES THAT THE ONGOING HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IS BEYOND THE GOVERNMENT'S OWN CAPACITY TO RESPOND EFFECTIVELY. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE APPEALED TO DONORS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE TO WAR-STRICKEN POPULATIONS. MISSION ALSO BELIEVES IT IS IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S INTEREST TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THOSE MOST AFFECTED BY THE WAR.

5. (U) MISSION AND ITS FIELD PARTNERS APPRECIATE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S CONTRIBUTIONS IN FY 2004. THIS ASSISTANCE HELPED SIGNIFICANTLY TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE WAR FOR THE ASSISTED POPULATIONS. IN FY 2004, USG FUNDS WERE USED TO SECURE SEEDS AND TOOLS FOR RETURNEE POPULATIONS ATTEMPTING TO RESTART THEIR LIVES, FOR SHELTER AND BASIC NON-FOOD ITEMS FOR IDPS, AND FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE FOR POPULATIONS IN THE MOST WAR-AFFECTED HEALTH ZONES. USG FUNDS WERE ALSO USED TO REOPEN THE CRITICAL RAILROAD LINE BETWEEN LUBUMBASHI AND KINDU, GREATLY CONTRIBUTING TO THE FOOD SECURITY OF POPULATIONS THAT HAD REMAINED ISOLATED FOR THE DURATION OF THE WAR. USG FUNDS CONTINUE TO PLAY THE CRITICAL ROLE OF PROVIDING SUBSIDIZED AIR TRANSPORTATION FOR NGOS REACHING DIFFICULT-TO-ACCESS AREAS TO DELIVER RELIEF SUPPLIES.

MEECE